

A Research on the modes of life of the so-called Wazyu Villages in Mino and Owari in Japan

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With respect to the degree of modernization of the modes of life as illustrated by food habits, rural rituals, festivals, calendar, radio, newspaper, agricultural machines and others 118 buraku of Wazyu rural villages were compared with as many buraku of the neighbouring ones. Modern conveniences such as bicycle, radio, newspaper and agricultural machines are shown to have prevailed fairly more and somewhat earlier in Wazyu than in other villages, and so far the former can be held to surpass the latter in the extent of modernization of the way of life. On the other hand, antiquated folkways and usages, particularly those regarding calendar linger mostly more in Wazyu villages. How can such a paradoxical phenomenon be interpreted? Firstly, it might be said that this is one example of the general principle advanced by cultural anthropologists, especially Robert Redfield, that there are not always mere interdependence and consistency, but independence and inconsistency in various elements of culture. Secondly, it might be imagined that it is attributed to a thing peculiar to Wazyu villages. Since modern material devices are generally of the kind to be accessible if only an economic means enough to afford them were given, and the economic condition of Wazyu is somewhat better as compared with the adjoining villages after the recent relief due to river re-constructions from damages of inundations, the greater degree of diffusion of such material conveniences there is not difficult to understand, while because in former times Wazyu villages were in economically bad and consequently culturally stagnant state owing to frequent damages of inundations, and it

takes considerably long time to liquidate such stagnancy in social and mental climate, though not so in the material aspects of life, it is thought not to be improbable that antiquated habits and modes of life persist more in Wazyū villages.